

EPA's Office of Water – Key Regulatory Initiatives

Location: Capitol Hilton

Time: 8:00am (10 minutes/OD)

INTRODUCTION:

- Thank **Chris Hornback** for the invitation to attend today's event.
- Who here works with drinking water utilities/or drinking water sector?

West VA – Source Water Protection

- Our nation was reminded of the vulnerability of our drinking water supplies a few months back when a chemical spill left 300,000 residents in West Virginia without
 - water to drink,
 - cook,
 - bathe or
 - wash
- after West Virginia American had to notify the affected customers that spanned over nine counties within the Charleston metropolitan area.
 - This included homes, business and hospitals.
- Three months after this event, this area is still impacted by this event.
 - Public trust and confidence was shattered.
 - The odor threshold far below the safe level defined by CDC made for a communications nightmare, but it could have been far worse
- Many factors contributed to this incident
 - A leaking tank and failed secondary containment
 - Proximity to drinking water intake
 - Inadequate system to notify the public water system
 - Few available options for alternate supplies
- For this reason, it's important to remember how critical the protection of our source water

is to the community and their health.

- And it is also important that we not assume that all potential threats to DW supplies will look just like this one
- My office continues to work with stakeholders to promote activities to protect drinking water
 - These activities must include cross industry coordination.
 - That we need drinking water utilities to reach out to emergency response personnel at both the local and state level to ensure their drinking water utility is included in their planning and implementation plans.
- There is a need to share source water assessment information with local planning officials so that drinking water protection can be considered when siting and managing new and existing potential contaminant sources.
- So I want to encourage you to think about this important matter of source water protection, when you are out in the field looking at your utilities.

SDWA/CWA Collaboration Initiative:

- One of our best strategies for protecting both ground water and surface water in managing water quality is to enhance coordination and collaboration between the CWA/SDWA programs.
- Both DW and CW programs are working to identify CWA tools that can be applied to protect not only surface water but also support protection of ground water as sources of drinking water and drinking water supply.
- *I want to provide a quick overview of our latest effort to identify avenues to integrate the programs:*
- A State-EPA Workgroup was formed in summer 2012.
 - Includes all four OW offices,

- three state water associations (GWPC, NACWA, ASDWA)
- States/Interstate Commissions (NH, NY, NC, IN, OH, FL, DC, MN, WI, CO, KY, UT, WA, IA, ME, KS, ORSANCO, NEIWPCC),
- In addition - overarching recommendations of the workgroup were endorsed by the EPA Regional WDDs. (Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8)
- ***Take the time to thank NACWA for their time and commitment as being part of this workgroup.***
- ***Goal & Charge of the workgroup is to develop tools to:***
 - Identify opportunities to improve drinking water protection and
 - to advance water quality goals by using CWA tools and
 - Institutionalizing cross-programmatic thinking and collaboration.
- ***Final Product will be a:***
 - Toolkit: ***Opportunities to Enhance the Protection of Drinking Water Sources and Advance the Achievement of Watershed Goals through the Clean Water Act: A Toolkit for State, Interstate, and Federal Water Program Managers***
 - is intended to be used by state, tribal, EPA Regional and HQ CWA and SDWA managers and staff to initiate communications across program offices,
 - apply the tools to address water quality problems on the ground, and
 - improve coordination and integration of program goals.
 - We will appreciate your input on this
 - We hope to pilot actions – summer 2014 timeframe.
- We plan to host webinars on each tool/product or combination of tools to help states understand, choose, and implement the recommendations best suited to their needs and help address challenges.
- Future version of this document could take the form of a user-friendly/ interactive web-based tool.

Climate Change Impacts on Water Infrastructure & the Need for Resiliency

- As we continue to experience higher frequency and intensity natural disasters event, water infrastructure resiliency will be key in the recovery process.
 - Super Storm Sandy showed us just how vulnerable our populations and infrastructure can be to extreme weather conditions.
 - It is critical that utilities be as resilient as possible to be able to
 - quickly respond to and
 - recover from incidents when they are affected.
 - Citizens and emergency responders alike are beginning to understand just how critical a role that water and wastewater utilities play in community continuity and recovery.
 - EPA continues to support increased awareness within the emergency management community of the cascading economic and environmental impacts that can result from service disruptions in the water sector.
 - Disruptions to drinking and waste water services can have severe impacts on public health,
 - which is why it's critical for utilities to become more resilient and be prepared to conduct emergency response when an event does strike.
 - EPA will continue to **build tools that educate** our utilities about climate science and adaptation options so that utility owners and operators better prepare their systems for the impacts of climate change.
 - As Nancy mentioned, my office developed and continues to support the Climate Ready
- ### Water Utilities
- provides resources to help the water sector adapt to climate change.
 - promotes a clear understanding of climate science and adaptation options and

- encourages the consideration of integrated water resources management planning in the water sector.
- As Nancy mentioned, we continue to support Climate Resilience Evaluation & Awareness Tool (CREATE)
 - is a software tool to assist drinking water and wastewater utility owners and operators in understanding potential climate change threats and assessing the related risks at their individual utilities.
 - We continue to host workshops with utilities to help them implement the plans at their utility.
- EPA will continue to **work with other federal agencies** as well as state and local authorities to facilitate communication and coordination at all levels to ensure emergency preparedness in case of an event.
- I encourage you to check out FedFUNDS –
 - Set of interactive webpages that provides tailored information to water and wastewater utilities about applicable federal disaster funding programs.
 - With the use of the five buttons in Fed FUNDS you can obtain key information and application forms on federal disaster funding.
 - Utilities often expressed to EPA how confusing it was to navigate the federal funding process when an emergency hits....this website was designed to address this issue.

Water Reuse

- As we talk about climate change, one of the most immediate challenges many communities across the country are facing is drought
- It is critical that we work with stakeholders to identify strategies that will work in their communities
- Water conservation, water reuse, alternate water supplies, ASR and others

- An increasing number of states and stakeholders continue to ask EPA for guidance on water reuse; specifically direct potable reuse.
- The number of project proposals to implement reuse from utilities is also increasing.
- Nancy recently visited the GROUND WATER REPLENISHMENT SYSTEM out in Orange County.
 - Which takes highly treated wastewater, treats with microfiltration, reverse osmosis and UV with hydrogen peroxide
 - Then replenishes Orange County groundwater basin and
 - Helps prevent seawater intrusion to groundwater supplies.
 - Has a current production capacity of 70 million gallons of water per day
 - Produces enough water for nearly 600,000 people.
- It's an amazing example of great collaboration between Orange County Water District and the Orange County Sanitation District and public education.
 - When we visited this facility we learned that they reach out to the community by doing pizza parties!
- In Big Spring, Texas – a town of 27,000-faced is third worst drought in history in 2011 and so it started to collect and treat wastewater and blending it with regular potable water.
- Several major water reuse projects have been implemented in Texas
- The Texas Water Development Board has funded several major water reuse projects such as the San Antonio Water System's recycled water project.
- For this reason, I have asked my staff to explore this matter further and try to identify what is the best role for our office.
- There are a suite of options for addressing water availability issues.
 - From water conservation to water efficiency
 - Consolidation to water reuse: both indirect and direct potable water use.

- These all have different complexities, and public health implications.

LCR Workgroup

- As you all know, the Agency has been working on the long term revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule.
- The Lead and Copper rule is a complex treatment technique regulation.
- This regulation has some tough issues—which is why we decided to ask our NDWAC to form a working group at our December 2013 meeting.
- The agency is seeking in-depth input on complex key rule revision topics.
- This working group will meet over the course of a year and provide detailed input to the NDWAC committee on these key issues.
- The key issues the working group will tackle include:
 - Sample Site Selection Criteria
 - Lead Sampling Protocol
 - Public Education for Copper
 - Measures to Ensure Optimal Corrosion Control Treatment
 - Lead Service Line Replacement Requirements
- The first meeting was hosted two weeks ago: March 25 & 26.
- The kick-off meeting was a success...working group members were highly engaged...we had excellent discussions.
- The next meeting is scheduled for May 29-30.

Thank you for your time today and I look forward to today's event.